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ABSTRACT

The feasibility of centralizing current periodicals in this university library was investigated as a means of providing for greater accessibility to the periodicals, reducing theft, and improving the efficiency of technical services. Highlighted are concerns brought up by eight other academic libraries that have some type of centralized periodical collection: (1) the periodical room being utilized as a study hall, (2) security, (3) circulation, (4) special control of high risk titles, (5) periodical arrangement--by title or call number and (6) supervision of the periodical room. Appendices include the questionnaire sent to the eight academic libraries, a layout of the periodicals room, and check-out and circulation procedures at the Ellis Library. (MER)

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CENTRALIZATION OF CURRENT PERIODICALS IN ELMER ELLIS LIBRARY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI AT COLUMBIA

by

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IR 005 787

CENTRALIZATION OF CURRENT PERIODICALS IN ELMER ELLIS LIBRARY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI AT COLUMBIA

The current periodicals arrangement at Ellis Library had been highly unsatisfactory for quite some time. Mutilation and loss of issues was very high. During the fall of 1975 and spring of 1976 interest in centralizing periodicals increased and a committee was formed to study the situation and make a recommendation. The committee searched literature in the field and sent questionnaires to other large academic libraries. Centralization of current, unbound periodicals was agreed upon by reference librarians after the research conducted showed a high degree of satisfaction in other academic libraries.

BACKGROUND

Since March 1976 the librarians in the University of Missouri at Columbia's (UMC) Elmer Ellis Library have been investigating the feasibility of centralizing the unbound issues of the nearly 8,000 currently received periodicals in the collection. Problems with current periodicals were unending. Mutilation and theft of issues were rampant. Locating periodicals in the nine subject areas was time-consuming and for the novice patron nearly impossible. Reference librarians were spending much of their days dealing with frustrating magazine problems. Patrons continually encountered difficulty in locating magazines and finding them intact. Valuable office space in an already crowded building was taken up with storing issues waiting for binding and high-risk titles. There was no question that something had to be done. In 1974 the Services Committee, which studied various library problems and proposed solutions, recommended that periodicals be centralized. However, due to the acute space and staffing problems that recommendation was never implemented. The problems, of course, continued to increase until the spring of 1976 when again serious discussion about centralization of current periodicals began. The Committee on Current Periodicals Control, formed in March, 1976, began its study of the literature on this topic with great zeal only to find that there has been very little written on the subject. In an effort to aid other libraries who may also be wrestling with this complex problem and to expand the extant literature in this area, the authors would like to share the University of Missouri-Columbia's experiences.

IMPLEMENTATION

The reference librarians in the main library were those who dealt most often with periodical problems. Frustrated students and faculty struggled to find journals only to discover that they were missing or that specific articles had been torn out.[1] It was that reference group who met on March 9, 1976 and laid the foundation for the centralization plan. Nearly everyone felt that all periodical titles currently received

should be sent to a controlled area. The idea of placing only a selected number of periodicals in a controlled area was seen as contributing further to the undesirable complexity of the library's periodical situation. The need for a committee to study in detail the various alternatives for controlling current periodicals was determined.

Three librarians were asked by the Associate Director of Libraries to serve on the Committee on Current Periodicals Control. Chaired by the Head of the Science Library and including the Assistant Social Science Librarian and the Assistant Undergraduate Librarian, the committee began its work in April 1976. Their primary responsibilities were to define the problem as it existed in terms of service goals and objectives and to describe the alternatives to the present way of controlling periodicals, including the pros and cons of each in terms of space and staffing problems.

The research methods of the committee included scanning several years of annual reports of other academic libraries to attempt to determine how periodicals are handled in other libraries and using Library Literature to find relevant periodical articles. In addition the committee read monographs dealing with academic libraries. Few helpful periodical articles or monographs were found. The committee also interviewed the library administration and department heads and other persons directly involved in some phase of servicing periodicals.[2] The consensus of the UMC librarians was that control of current periodicals was needed. All periodicals which are published two or more times per year should be included. All reference serials, serials held in Acquisitions and Special Materials, and all Federal government documents which are not catalogued into Dewey or Library of Congress classification should be excluded. Only unbound issues, no more than twelve months worth at a time, should be housed in the area. The preferred circulation policy was that all items be used within the Current Periodicals Reading Room, and that high-risk titles be further controlled behind a desk or counter. Finally, the committee interviewed by mailed questionnaire[3] nine academic libraries[4] who were known to have some type of centralized periodical collections.

Eight of the nine libraries contacted responded to the questionnaire. Those initial inquiries were followed by telephone calls to some of the libraries to clarify certain points. The contacts with those libraries yielded many useful ideas and suggested certain pitfalls which should be avoided. One concern of the committee was that the periodical room might be used as a general "study hall" and result in crowding for periodical users. Many of the other libraries consulted said that indeed there were persons studying in their periodical rooms but that there was plenty of room for them and for those persons actually using periodicals. None of the libraries interviewed attempted to prevent anyone from studying in the periodical room.

Another concern was with security. Security in other libraries ranged from security strips in journal issues to security checkers who monitor those persons leaving the periodical room to simply a check at the main exits of the library. Most said that persons working in the room provide a general surveillance of the patrons using the room.

Regarding the circulation of periodicals, most libraries did not circulate periodicals out of the room, but some did circulate them for use within the building. Some permitted faculty to check out journals for very short periods, usually for copying in their departments. (Presently at UMC, bound journals, except those in the Undergraduate Library, circulate overnight to students and two weeks to faculty. Bound Undergraduate journals circulate overnight to everyone. All unbound journals are non-circulating for everyone.)

Most of the libraries interviewed had a specially controlled area where high-risk titles were kept in some type of reserve situation. A special form of check out was required even for use within the room.

The arrangement of the periodicals within the room was a much debated topic at UMC. Call number versus title arrangement was the issue. Many of the libraries interviewed had some form of call number arrangement. Others had title or other arrangements which worked well in their own situations. After much discussion, it

was decided to put UMC journals in main entry order to correspond with the entries in the serials catalog. Large computer printouts will be available to facilitate the location of specific titles.

Supervision of the periodicals room in other libraries ranges from a professional librarian in the room to a paraprofessional in the room who reports to a professional librarian whose primary duties are elsewhere. UMC has decided that the original setting up of the periodical room will be done by a professional librarian who currently reports to the Head of Ellis Library Reference Services. He will be assisted by at least three full-time clerical persons and a number of student assistants.

Although the committee reported to the reference group at each phase of its research, a summary of the questionnaires and tentative recommendations were presented in January 1977. All of the libraries consulted (with the exception of one which had not yet completed its own centralization process) expressed at least some degree of satisfaction with their current periodicals control and indicated that in most cases centralization had greatly improved service to their patrons.

Based in part on the response from the libraries and in part on the recognized need to improve periodicals control at UMC, the committee recommended that a current periodicals collection be established. It would house periodicals with a frequency of two or more issues per year. The periodicals would come from the Undergraduate; Science; Language and Literature; Education and Psychology; Social Science; Geography, History and Philosophy; Art, Archaeology, and Music; and Library Science Libraries. There should be seating to accommodate at least one hundred persons. The collection would be housed in a room with a security checker at its only entrance and would not circulate from that room. The majority of the periodicals would be freely accessible for browsing. High risk titles, identified by subject area librarians, would be shelved behind a counter and personnel there would hold the identification cards of those individuals using controlled titles until each issue was returned to the counter. Photocopying facilities would be available, so long as no conflict exists with the new copyright law as it goes into effect. The room would be open and the materials

accessible during the entire time that the library building is open.

The recommendation, with specific details to be worked out as centralization proceeds, were accepted by the reference group and then passed on to the Director of Libraries and his advisory group, the Library Council, who approved the plans. Implementation of a current periodicals reading room for the Ellis Library is scheduled to begin in the winter of 1977.

CONCLUSION

Working within the architectural limitations of the existing building, it was difficult to find space truly suitable to house the periodicals, staff, and patrons. Space was found on the first floor by arranging to centralize the reference functions of most areas of the library in one large area on the second floor. It is hoped that there will be much improved accessibility to current periodicals with the new arrangement because: 1.) the current journals will be in one location 2.) the area will be staffed all hours that the library is open and patrons will no longer have to depend on staffing of the various subject area offices 3.) reduction (hopefully great) in theft and mutilation of the unbound current titles 4.) more technical services functions will be centralized (i.e. binding, claiming, replacing) and thus be more efficient.

Of course, the success of the current periodicals centralization can not be predicted, but the committee has confidence that it will be a great improvement over the present system. The committee does plan to report on the progress of the Current Periodicals Reading Room after it has been in operation for a full year. In this way, they hope that other libraries facing this situation can receive information which may be of assistance.

FOOTNOTES

[1]A study of the claims and replacements activity in the Social Science department from January 1, 1976 to May 3, 1977 illuminated the problems even more clearly. The Social Science department has approximately 1,500 current subscriptions. On May 4, 1977 there were 293 outstanding claims and 396 outstanding replacements for entire issues. Replacement figures for missing pages were not tabulated. There were 103 issues at the bindery on May 4 which had been replaced and received. Besides Social Science, there are seven areas in the main library and eight branches outside the main library which have current journals. The Acquisitions Librarian estimates that $10,000 was spent for replacements for the entire UMC library system in 1976-77.

[2]see appendix one for the questionnaire used.

[3]see appendix two for the questionnaire used.

[4]Houston University, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Iowa State University, Pennsylvania State University, University of Kansas, University of Oklahoma, University of Kentucky, University of Georgia, University of Michigan.

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA

University Library

Columbia, Missouri 65201
Telephone

I. A. If periodicals were to be centralized which of the following should be included:

All serials
Annuals
Quarterlies
Monthlies
Weeklies
Dailies (i.e. newspapers)
English language serials only
Other?

B. Are there any kinds of serials which should be excluded?

Government documents
Reference serials
Others?

II. What time span should the collection cover?

Unbound issues only
Last 12 months
Other?

III. What should the circulation policy be?

Closed access?
  check out for library use?
  check out for room use?
  other?

Open access?
  no check out - use only in room?
  no check out - use only in library?
  check out - use only in library?
  other?

What department do you work in?

_____

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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA

University Library

Columbia, Missouri 65201
Telephone

We are examining the feasibility of removing our current periodicals from their subject areas and shelving them in a current periodicals reading room.

We would like to know how you handle current periodicals in your library, and would certainly appreciate your response to the following questions.

1. Are your current periodicals centralized?
   Yes _____ (If yes, please answer the remaining questions.)
   No _____ (If no, please indicate and skip the remaining questions.)

2. Which departments are responsible for the binding, claiming and replacing functions associated with your current periodicals?

3. Do you have a serials department? Yes _____ No _____
   If yes, what are its general areas of responsibility?

4. What is your circulation policy for current periodicals?

5. What security measures do you employ to prevent loss and mutilation in your current periodicals reading room?

6. Do you have photocopying facilities located near your current periodicals area?

7. What problems have you encountered with a centralized current periodicals collection?

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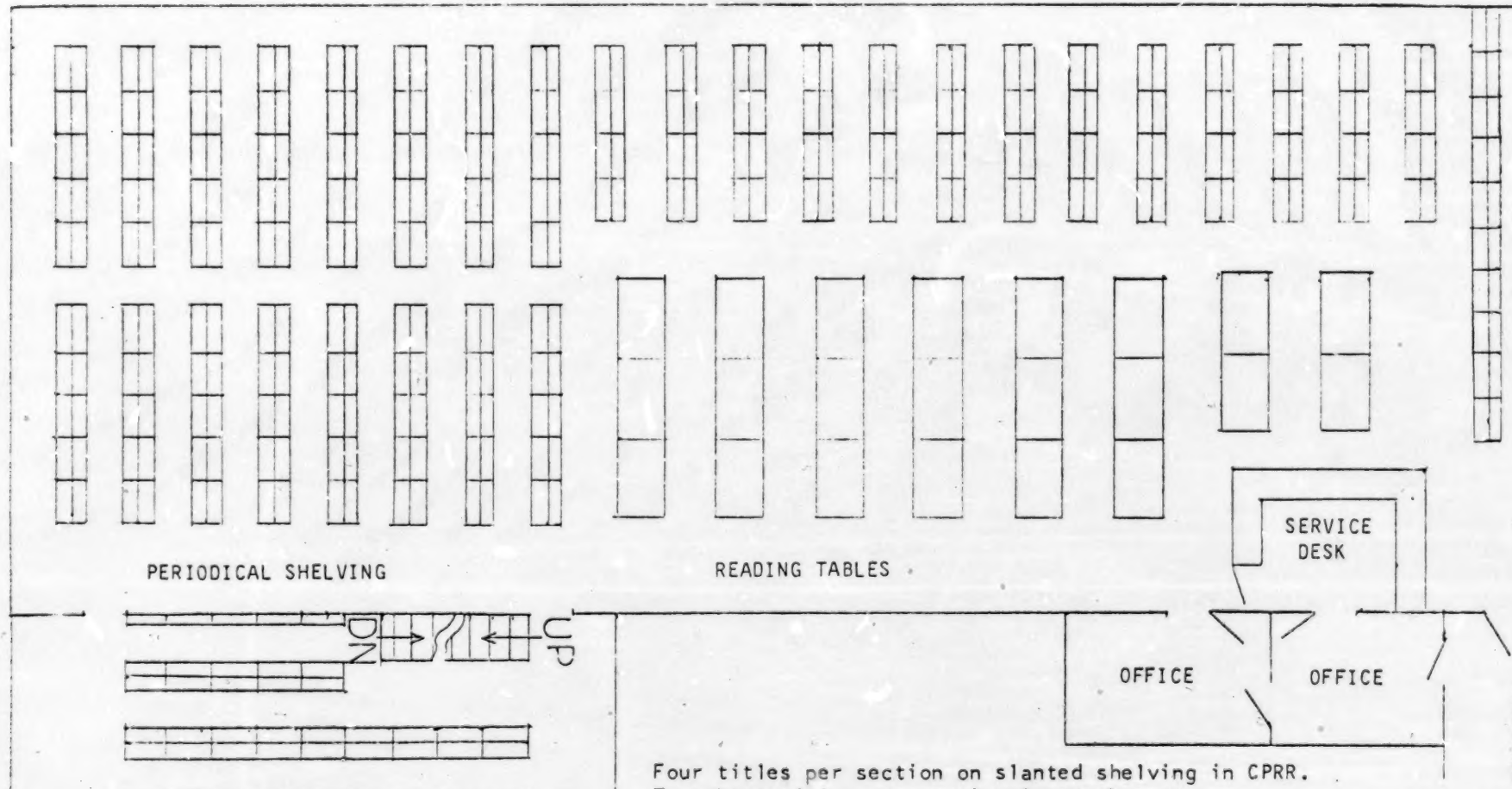
CURRENT PERIODICALS READING ROOM

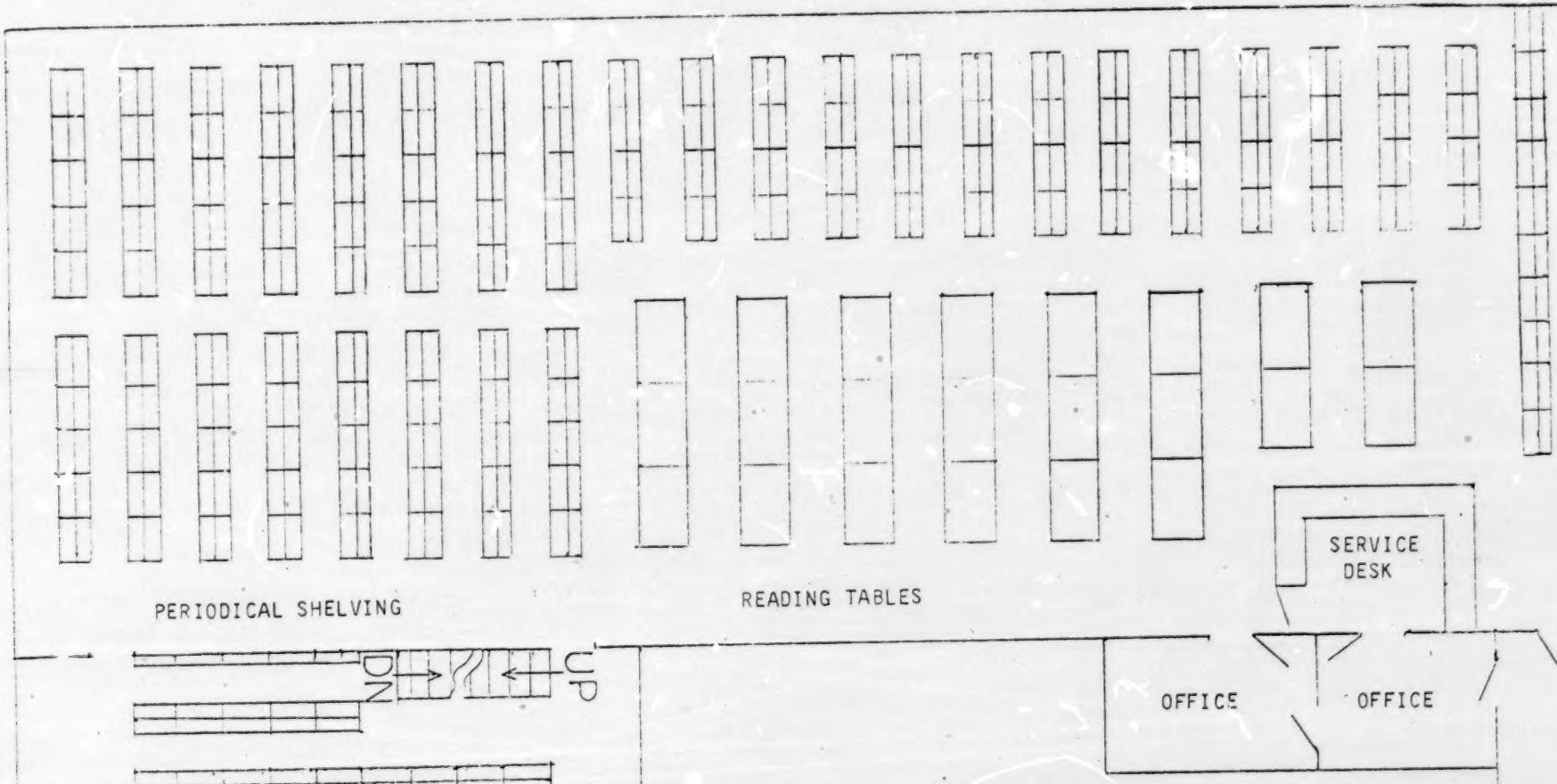
UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA ELLIS LIBRARY



Four titles per section on slanted shelving in CPRR.
Two-three titles per section in stack area.
Seating for eighty eight people.

CURRENT PERIODICALS READING ROOM

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA ELLIS LIBRARY



Four titles per section on slanted shelving in CPRR.
Two-three titles per section in stack area.
Seating for eighty eight people.

SCALE 3/32" = 1'

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-COLUMBIA ELLIS LIBRARY CURRENT PERIODICALS READING ROOM
CIRCULATION AND CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

The following procedures apply to all students, faculty, and staff members. A valid ID card is required for all borrowing. The Current Periodicals Reading Room (CPRR) is open most hours that the main library is open. A photocopy machine is available in the room.

I. Use of CPRR

A. In-library use of periodicals

1. All unbound current journals shall be used in the CPRR.
2. If journals must be taken for any reason from the CPRR for use within the building, they must be checked out at the desk. The following information must be provided: Date, borrower's name, borrower's ID number, name of journal, date of journal.

B. Periodicals shelved in the CPRR are in alphabetical main entry order in an open stack arrangement. The most recent issue is visible on a slanted shelf. Older current issues are shelved behind the slanted shelf. There are no time limits upon the use of materials within the CPRR.

C. There are selected high-risk titles which are shelved behind the service desk and must be checked out even for use in the room.

D. Out of building use of CPRR materials

1. Journals may be checked out for departmental photocopying by faculty, staff, and graduate students. A two-part manual form is used and therefore the transaction is not completed through the library's automated circulation system. The check-out form lists the following information: title of journal, call number, date of issue, volume and number of issue, patron's name, address, phone number, and status.
2. Journals may also be checked out by handicapped students, especially those who need assistance by a volunteer reader.
3. Loan periods are generally four hours.

II. Fines

The circulation department handles fines.

III. Bound journals

A. Approximately two hundred titles, most of which are indexed in The Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, are located in the stacks adjacent to the CPRR. Although they are generally used in the CPRR, they may be removed from the room without being checked out at the service desk. These selected bound titles circulate out of the building overnight for all patrons.

B. All other of the main library's approximately seven thousand bound titles are in subject area libraries and may be used without restriction within the library building. They are circulated out of the building overnight for all students and staff and two weeks for faculty.

IV. Newspapers

A. The most recent daily and Sunday issues of the two local and several St. Louis and Kansas City newspapers are kept in the CPRR on rods. In addition the most recent daily and Sunday issues of the New York Times are kept as well as a few issues of the Christian Science Monitor. About two weeks' worth of the two campus papers are also kept in the CPRR.

B. Other current Missouri newspapers and also back issues of Missouri newspapers are kept at the State Historical Society within the main building. The Special Materials Library in Ellis Library houses many non-Missouri newspapers on microfilm.

C. The Journalism Library, a branch library, receives current issues of many non-Missouri U.S. newspapers and also newspapers from other countries.

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